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# ROUND TABLE

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A RADIO DISCUSSION OF

# POLLS AND THE CRISIS

WILLIAM BENTON
GEORGE GALLUP
HAROLD LASSWELL

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# ROUND TABLE

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## NOTE

*The supplementary information contained in the footnotes to the following text, developed by staff research, is not to be considered as representing the opinions of the* ROUND TABLE *speakers. Following the transcript of the broadcast are questions which readers may wish to use for analysis and discussion. It is hoped that teachers and discussion leaders may find this additional service of the* ROUND TABLE *transcript helpful in their study of the subject discussed in the broadcast.*

# POLLS AND THE CRISIS

## A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ROUND TABLE BROADCAST*

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WILLIAM BENTON, Vice-President of the University of Chicago

GEORGE GALLUP, Director, American Institute of Public Opinion

HAROLD D. LASSWELL, Political Scientist, Washington, D.C., Former Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago

* A radio discussion broadcast from New York City, over the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company, Sunday, May 25, 1941, at 2:30 P.M., Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

The ROUND TABLE, oldest educational program continuously on the air, is broadcast entirely without a script. Subjects are chosen because of their social, political, or economic significance. The program has no "ax to grind." In the selection of speakers, the effort is to provide a balanced discussion by participants who have special competence and knowledge. The opinion of each speaker is his own and in no way involves the responsibility of either the University of Chicago or the National Broadcasting Company.

# POLLS AND THE CRISIS

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*In times of crisis nations are faced with momentous decisions. A democratic nation must act in accordance with the will of its people. What do these people think about the problem of unemployment, the problem of taxation? And, today, what does America think about the war? About Britain's chance of winning? About convoys? About entering the war?*

*Although the millions of letters and telegrams pouring into Washington from every city, town, and country farm carry the opinions of their writers on these and many other problems, what do many silent citizens think? Who are they?*

*During the last decade public opinion polls have asked many questions, have corrected sampling errors, and have proved the accuracy of their findings in county, state, and national elections. In the last presidential election the American Institute of Public Opinion—the Gallup poll—erred less than 3 per cent in predicting the outcome.*

*Today the most important national issues revolve about questions of foreign policy. To answer many of the questions about America's attitude toward the war and to inquire into the meaning of these answers, the University of Chicago* ROUND TABLE *invited three experts to its microphone to discuss "Polls and the Crisis."*

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MR. LASSWELL: Well, Gallup, millions of Americans are constantly taking your name in vain on these polls. All sorts of things are said about them. I'd like to get a few things clear. For instance, who pays you?

MR. GALLUP: Some one hundred newspapers. They underwrite the entire cost of our studies.

MR. BENTON: Do you make any money? I don't like subsidized enterprises.

MR. GALLUP: Too little, I would say!

MR. LASSWELL: By the way, Gallup, how did you get into this in the first place?

MR. GALLUP: Some fifteen years ago I was an instructor at the University of Iowa. My job there was to teach public opinion, along with other journalistic courses. Then later on I got into newspaper and market research and discovered that these techniques could be applied to the problem of determining public opinion.[1]

MR. BENTON: In business I learned that there are three ways in which polls can go wrong. First, they can go wrong because you don't query enough people. Can you tell us what evidence you have to show that you do query enough people?

MR. GALLUP: Actually the number of people queried is a function of the law of probability. On every issue we cover some 3,000 to 50,000 people in the country. Of course, that means that it would take a good many years—in fact, 150 years—to get around to all of the people in the country.

MR. LASSWELL: Do you use as many as that in your British Institute?[2]

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[1] *The American Institute of Public Opinion—the Gallup poll—published its first findings in 1935; this is also true of the "Fortune" magazine survey, under the direction of Elmo Roper, a participant with Dr. Gallup in the discussion of "Polls and the Election" broadcast by the* ROUND TABLE *November 3, 1940. The "Fortune" and Gallup polls are the only long-established, continuous, year-round public affairs public opinion testing agencies with a large following. Their findings are recognized by the "Public Opinion Quarterly," which devotes a section in each of its issues to a summary of the results of these two agencies.*

[2] *Public opinion testing is being carried on in England despite the war. A projected French organization using similar techniques was dropped when the war began in 1939.*

MR. GALLUP: The samples there are somewhat smaller, but, by and large, we follow the same techniques there as we do in this country.

MR. BENTON: The second question is: Are these people representative? Are they a true cross-section?

MR. GALLUP: The accuracy of polls such as ours depends almost entirely on the care with which the people polled are selected, so most of our time and effort is devoted to this problem of selecting the right people—that is, a proper cross-section—to question.[3]

MR. LASSWELL: I don't think there has been much criticism recently of the use of the sample that Gallup's Institute is employing. It seems to me that most people now take it for granted.

MR. BENTON: I know many businesses which know Gallup's methods and have studied them and have used similar methods. I think it is universally admitted today that he has a large enough sample and a typical cross-section. That, therefore, brings a third question about polls and where they may go wrong. It concerns the question itself—the framing of the question.

MR. LASSWELL: How do you select the questions?

MR. GALLUP: Every week we select some six or ten questions. We do this on the basis of current news, current issues, current problems, and what we think those problems will be in the next two or three weeks.

MR. LASSWELL: I understand that it takes about two weeks for your interviewers to get all the necessary facts about any one question.[4]

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[3] *The cross-section for testing public opinion represents all elements of the population according to age, sex, income level, and religious-belief distribution.*

[4] *For a typical Gallup poll interview, see the* ROUND TABLE *broadcast of November 5, 1939—"Testing Public Opinion."*

MR. GALLUP: Actually about ten days.

MR. LASSWELL: How many days are spent tabulating and distributing this to newspaper readers?

MR. GALLUP: About four additional days. The ballots are tabulated, of course, as they come in.

MR. LASSWELL: That is a terribly interesting point. I don't believe most people understand just how long it is between the time they read about people's opinions and the events that have shaped the opinions.

MR. BENTON: So, of course, in the meantime some event could change the opinion. For instance, the sinking of the "Hood" last night.[5] Today Gallup might be publishing a poll on the subject of convoys. Questions asked two weeks ago might be affected if the same poll were made tomorrow, after the sinking of the "Hood."

MR. LASSWELL: Of course, that does to a certain extent reduce the value of these polls to policy-makers, yet policy-makers must be dependent upon them. After all, the poll is the most modern method by which the policy-maker is able to keep in touch with the changing currents of public sentiment.

MR. BENTON: I certainly agree that the poll is a far better way to keep in touch with public sentiment than the old way—the number of letters, telegrams, newspaper editorials, and so on. I am reminded of Alice Longworth's remark on Willkie's nomination. She said: "The Willkie nomination was a 'grass roots' movement straight from the heart of every country club in America."[6]

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[5] *The British battleship "Hood" was sunk in the North Atlantic on May 24 by the new German warship "Bismarck."*

[6] *The Gallup poll on Republican voters' presidential preferences for 1940 showed Willkie coming up rapidly in the last months of the preconvention campaign. The release of June 20, 1940, however, showed Thomas Dewey still ahead of Willkie.*

MR. GALLUP: I think it ought to be emphasized that our job is merely one of fact-finding. We regard ourselves merely as reporters of public opinion.

MR. LASSWELL: What we want to consider is the meaning of the polls on the current public issues confronting our nation in this crisis.

MR. BENTON: Yes, Gallup is, in effect, a mirror. He is a mirror that everybody is using these days to cast reflections.

MR. LASSWELL: Of course, my feeling about this is that, as far as poll procedure is concerned, the main contribution it can make to the policy-maker is to present to him a picture of the general expectations about the future and of the general preferences people have. After all, a policy-maker must take public opinion into account as *one* of the major factors. However, that does not end his responsibility. The President of the United States, for example, must not only consider what the polls show but *weigh* those results against the costs and the gains and the hazards as he sees them.

MR. GALLUP: I agree with that.

MR. BENTON: I certainly agree, too. It is the hazard and the risk that make it difficult. Stanley High, one of the "crack" reporters of the United States, told me a story about Chamberlain at Munich that illustrates the risk and hazard the policy-maker faces. He compared Chamberlain's problem to that of a man who was sentenced to death by a medieval king.

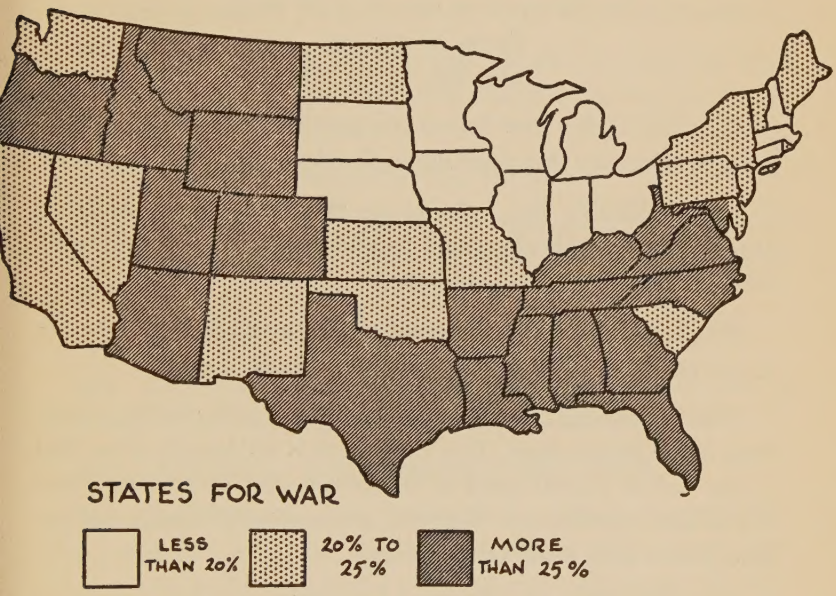
The man said to the king: "O King! Give me thirty days before you kill me, and I will teach your favorite donkey how to talk."

The king didn't accept him but said: "Oh, what's the difference! Give him thirty days, send him back to jail, and send the donkey over."

The next day the man's friends came around and said: "What is the idea anyway? What do you expect to do?"

# WAR SENTIMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

*Gallup asks: If you were asked to vote today on the question of the United States' entering the war against Germany and Italy, how would you vote—to go into the war or to stay out of the war?*




The man said: "Well, in the next thirty days a lot of things can happen. In the first place, the king may die; in the second place, I may die; and, in the third place, there is just a bare chance that the donkey may learn how to talk."

MR. LASSWELL: I guess one of the variables in calculating the hazards of the future is the conditions under which opinion itself will change. But that carries us back to the very first and basic question we need to talk about, and that is: How are we going to interpret these polls? What, after all, do these polls mean on all the major questions now before the country?

I feel quite sure that the best way to start is to take some of your

specific findings on certain questions. So what I am going to do is to state one of the questions and its answer:

*If you were asked to vote today on the question of the United States' entering the war against Germany and Italy, how would you vote: to go into the war or to stay out of the war?*

*Go in: 21 per cent*
*Stay out: 79 per cent*

MR. BENTON: How do you interpret this 21 per cent? Do you get approximately that same figure showing up in other questions?

MR. GALLUP: Yes, I should say that that is the case. These 21 per cent are people who would go into the war today. They would take the initiative in declaring war.[7]

MR. BENTON: You have not made any analysis of who the 21 per cent are. What kind of people are they?

MR. LASSWELL: Some of your polls have really begun to show some of the factors there. Don't you think it will be safe to say that it does include a great many of the persons who, by reason of their educational experience or what not, are extremely friendly to England, plus a good many other groups?

MR. BENTON: The Rhodes scholars?

MR. GALLUP: There is some interesting information on that point. By and large, these facts would indicate that people in the higher educational levels are more inclined to vote to go into the war than people who have not had the advantages of the same education.

MR. LASSWELL: Also, I think some of your polls show that the South, in general, feels more strongly on this point than New England or the Middle West or the Far West.

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[7] *The trend of opinion on this question during recent months is shown in the illustration on pages 14–15.*

MR. GALLUP: Yes, in almost every poll the South seems to be slightly more belligerent.[8]

MR. LASSWELL: How would you summarize that, by the way? Could you give a generalized description of who the people are who want to go in now?

MR. BENTON: I'll tell you who Cantril, of Princeton, says they are. He says they are the people who have the most to lose by any change in the *status quo*.[9]

MR. LASSWELL: What does that mean?

MR. BENTON: Well, they are the most afraid of the hazards and risks that they feel will overcome them if the British Empire goes down.

MR. LASSWELL: You mean the upper-income groups?

MR. BENTON: The upper-income groups. This is just a tendency. This is a group that tends to be in the 21 per cent.

MR. LASSWELL: Is that essentially right, Gallup?

MR. GALLUP: Yes, but I think it is a mistake to generalize. You could, of course, take the opposite point of view and say that these are the people who see the problems of the future more clearly.

MR. LASSWELL: But, after all, this would just summarize what you said before; that is, the people of unusual education tend to favor prompt intervention.

MR. GALLUP: That's right! I would say that is a correct statement.

MR. LASSWELL: There, I think, we've tabbed one very clear

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[8] *Regional variations in opinion on this question are indicated in the map on page 7.*

[9] *For a detailed listing and analysis of these groups see the articles by Hadley Cantril and various associates listed with the suggested readings on page 24.*

answer to one question. About one-fifth of the people of the country are quite positive and clear and definite that they want to join the Allies—the anti-Axis powers—today. Isn't that right?

MR. GALLUP: That's right!

MR. LASSWELL: In trying to locate the people who are the least likely to say "Yes" to that question, the results on another of your questions are extremely important:

*If it appeared certain that there was no other way to defeat Germany and Italy except for the United States to go to war against them, would you be in favor of the United States' going to war?*

*Yes: 68 per cent*

*No: 24 per cent*

Isn't it fair to say that the 24 per cent who would not want to go into this war, even though Germany and Italy were victorious and England defeated, represents the group whose opinions are the most clearly formulated in the country on that particular side of the controversy?

MR. GALLUP: Yes, I think that is an accurate statement. It is the irreducible minimum on the isolationist side.

MR. BENTON: I think it is the irreducible minimum, because there are two implications on that question that tend to minimize that group. The first implication is that a part of our problem in this country actually is to defeat Germany and Italy. The second implication in the question is the apparent certainty or assurance that we are able to defeat them.

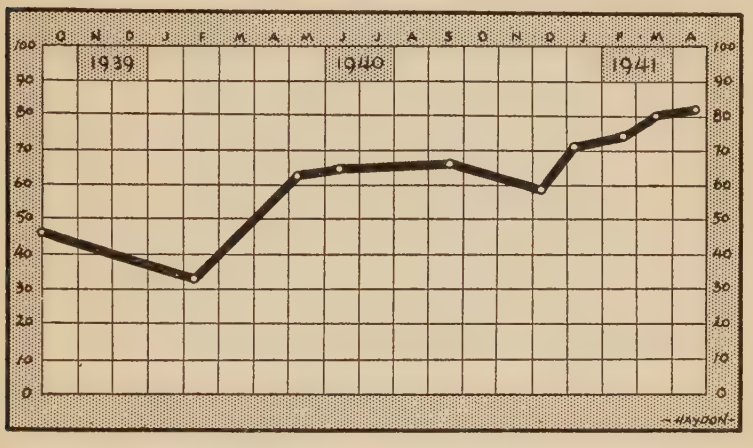
MR. LASSWELL: Let's see who the people are in this 24 per cent. I suppose it includes a very high proportion of people who come from German families; it includes, actually, the Hitler lovers and the friends of Germany. Besides that, I am quite sure it would include other groups.

MR. BENTON: Pacifists are undoubtedly in there.

MR. LASSWELL: Yes, and I suppose one could find a certain

# PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE WAR INEVITABLE

*Gallup asks: Do you think the United States will go into the war in Europe sometime before it is over, or do you think we will stay out of the war?*




number of people who, on grounds of patriotic policy, have come to the conclusion that the United States can be completely isolated from military contact.

MR. GALLUP: That is an important point.

MR. BENTON: We tend to forget, however, how many people 24 per cent comprises. Twenty-four per cent is, roughly, the number of people living in New York City, Chicago, Texas, Ohio, California, and Philadelphia.

MR. LASSWELL: You know, that brings up an extremely interesting point about what these figures mean. So far, we have said that 21 per cent of the people of the United States want to go to war tomorrow against Germany, and, roughly speaking, there are about 24 per cent of the people of the United States who say that they don't want to go to war against Germany and Italy even though Germany and Italy win out on the Continent and Britain is defeated.

MR. BENTON: And even though the implication is that we can defeat them.

MR. LASSWELL: What does that mean, Gallup, in terms of what the people in between are thinking?

MR. GALLUP: Of course, the people in between hold the balance of power. Some 55 per cent (which is, of course, an extremely large group—more than half) hold the balance of power.

MR. BENTON: I'd make another comment on this question, and that is that people may respond very differently to hypothetical questions of this kind that start out, "If it appeared certain . . . ."

MR. LASSWELL: What sort of thing do you mean?

MR. BENTON: That this 68 per cent, for instance, who say they would go to war "if it appeared certain" would not necessarily make the declaration of war if they had the responsibility.

MR. LASSWELL: Isn't there one thing that can be clearly stated about that point: that whenever people say they are going to do something the chances are that they will do it if they have been arguing and discussing the alternatives for quite a while?

MR. BENTON: That is a very good point, but suppose a man is asked the question: "You are walking across a bridge and you see a girl drowning, would you jump in to save her?" He is likely to answer "Yes" to that question. It does not at all follow that if he were on the bridge and the girl were drowning that he would jump in to try to rescue her.

MR. GALLUP: That is true, but, unfortunately, we do have to think of the future, and the present actions of people are guided somewhat by what they think will happen in the future. So you can't omit all references to the future.

MR. BENTON: I certainly concede that.

MR. LASSWELL: One of the key points here, after all, is to ask questions in such a way that the future is made as vivid as possible to the people. Wouldn't you concur in that, Gallup?

MR. GALLUP: Yes, I would.

MR. BENTON: And that makes it difficult in writing these questions.

MR. LASSWELL: Incidentally, it strikes me that the full significance of this distribution of opinion that we were talking about ought to be brought out and emphasized. We have 21 per cent of the people who say, "Let's fight Germany now"; and 24 out of every 100 who say, "We don't want to fight Germany and Italy."

MR. BENTON: Even if we could defeat them.

MR. LASSWELL: That means about how many millions of people are left to have their minds made up by the different propaganda agents, and so on, who are operating in this field?

MR. GALLUP: If you are talking in terms of voters, then I would say 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 voters, there being about 50,000,000 voters in the country.[10]

MR. BENTON: Over half the voters.

MR. GALLUP: Yes.

MR. LASSWELL: In an ordinary presidential election there would be as few as 10,000,000 people undecided at the time the campaign started.

MR. GALLUP: That's right. The battle in a presidential campaign is for about 10,000,000 votes.

MR. BENTON: You have the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies representing one group, the America First Committee representing the other group, and the two of them have over 50 per cent of the people against whom they are aiming their propaganda.

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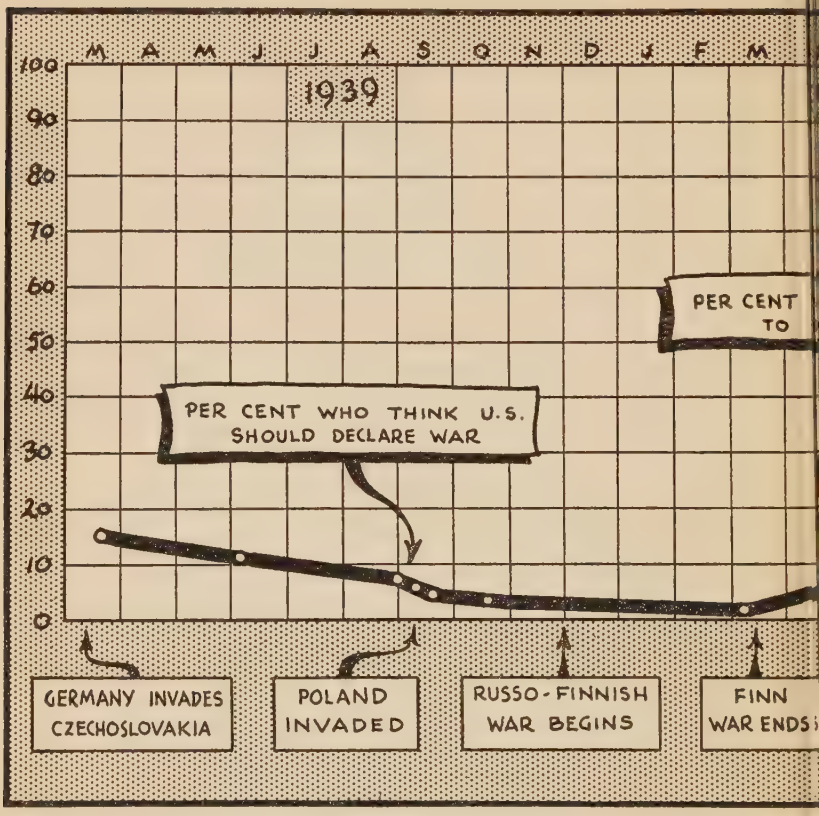
[10] *Just under fifty million voters took part in the 1940 elections. President Roosevelt received 27,250,000 votes, Wendell Willkie, 22,325,000, with minor party candidates (Socialist, Communist, Prohibition, and Socialist-Labor) splitting some 225,000 ballots.*

# TRENDS IN OPINION AND TYPE C



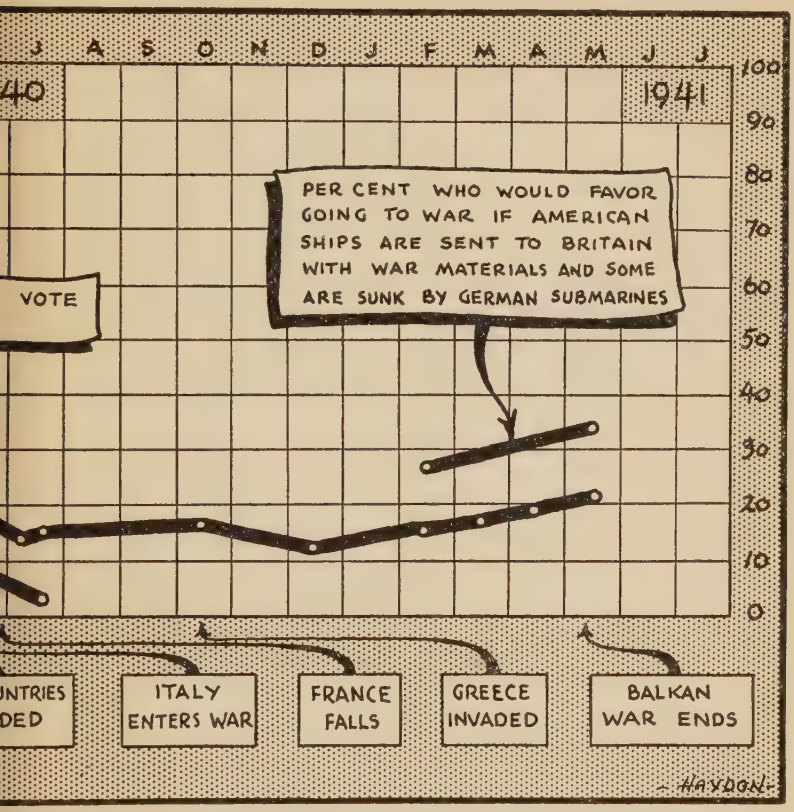

MR. LASSWELL: By the way, Gallup, I think another one of your questions tends to show that this percentage we have mentioned is just about right.

*In general, do you agree or disagree with what Lindbergh says?*

*Disagree: 63 per cent*
*Agree: 24 per cent*
*Undecided: 13 per cent*

Notice that the 24 per cent who agree with Lindbergh checks

# UESTION ON THE ISSUE OF WAR




exactly with the 24 per cent who don't want to fight Germany and Italy even if otherwise they will win.

MR. BENTON: In some ways that is a much tougher question than the last. Lindbergh has been called a Copperhead by the President; he has been, in effect, kicked out of the army. The implication is that he is a traitor; so, when 24 per cent actually agree with what he says, it is about as tough an admission as these people could be called upon to make because there are plenty of people who

are non-interventionists, or even isolationists, who don't necessarily agree with what Lindbergh says.[11]

MR. LASSWELL: Is that a fair comment, Gallup?

MR. GALLUP: I think undoubtedly there are factors involved apart from the question of intervention and isolation.

MR. BENTON: Lindbergh even says he does not want either side to win.

MR. LASSWELL: After all, that carries us up to the question of what these people in between—the 55 per cent—actually want. I think we may get some light on that by turning to another of the questions asked by the Gallup poll:

*Do you think this country's further safety depends on England's winning the war?*

*Yes: 70 per cent*
*No: 30 per cent*

Is that pretty clear, Gallup, from your point of view?

MR. GALLUP: Yes, the majority of people in the middle (that is to say, this larger group composed of, roughly, 50 to 55 per cent of all voters) believe that this country's safety depends on England's winning the war.

MR. BENTON: What makes them believe that? That is something to analyze.

MR. GALLUP: Of course, you are outside of my realm now.

MR. BENTON: Lasswell, as a psychiatrist, what do you think has caused them to believe that?

MR. LASSWELL: Whatever factors there may be, I think that what is important here is the precise phrasing of the question. Sup-

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[11] *President Roosevelt's remarks about Mr. Lindbergh were made at his press conference April 25. Lindbergh resigned his reserve commission in the Army Air Corps April 28.*

pose the question had been phrased in a slightly different form. Suppose the question had read something like this: "Do you think this country is bound to go down to military defeat some time in the next few years if England loses this war?" Wouldn't you agree that that would be very clear indeed?

MR. GALLUP: Yes—and loaded!

MR. LASSWELL: Yes, and in which direction? That is a very important point. Let's discuss alternative ways of formulating this question.

MR. BENTON: I agree that there is a load in there; but when you have in another question that you published the statement that 52 per cent think that England will win the war, you have in effect a loaded question when you imply to these people the sudden possibility of England's defeat. They have been conditioned to the fact that England is going to win the war. The experts have told them so: columnists, newspaper writers, radio commentators, Secretary Knox, Secretary Stimson, Dorothy Thompson, and Walter Winchell.

MR. GALLUP: Yes, but from the very beginning of this work we have found that events are much more important in making up people's minds than what anyone tells them.

MR. BENTON: Events are more important.

MR. GALLUP: In other words, actions speak louder than words.

MR. LASSWELL: I think that, after all, there are certain other questions that are stated in somewhat sharper form and which bear right on this point. Take, for example, this one:

*Which of these two things do you think is more important for the United States to do: to keep out of war ourselves or to help England even at the risk of war?*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Keep out:* | *35 per cent* |
| *Take the risk:* | *65 per cent** |

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* *See footnote, next page.*

MR. BENTON: That is a question that perhaps has had the most discussion of any of your questions, Gallup.[12] The interpretation of that question in large part revolves around the phrase "at the risk of."

MR. GALLUP: Of course, you have to take into account the answers on this question which we have just discussed: "Do you think this country's future safety depends on England's winning the war?" You discover that about 70 per cent of the voters believe this country's safety does depend on England's winning the war.

MR. BENTON: If they are wrong in that premise, they would be wrong in their response to this question.

MR. GALLUP: It is a matter of enlightened self-interest to these people that they should take this risk.

MR. BENTON: If they could be shown, or if they were policy-makers and knew that our future safety did *not* depend on England's winning the war, they would, of course, react in a different way to your next question.

MR. GALLUP: That's right!

MR. LASSWELL: I wonder if there would be any difference in the way the people responded if you asked certain questions about the kind of internal changes that they expect—either in the United States or in England or in Germany—if the war should continue for one or three or five or fifteen years. Have you asked anything of that sort?

MR. GALLUP: No, we haven't. You must understand that....

MR. BENTON: Wouldn't that be a good question: "Do you think the war will be an easy war, a six months' war, or a ten years' war?"

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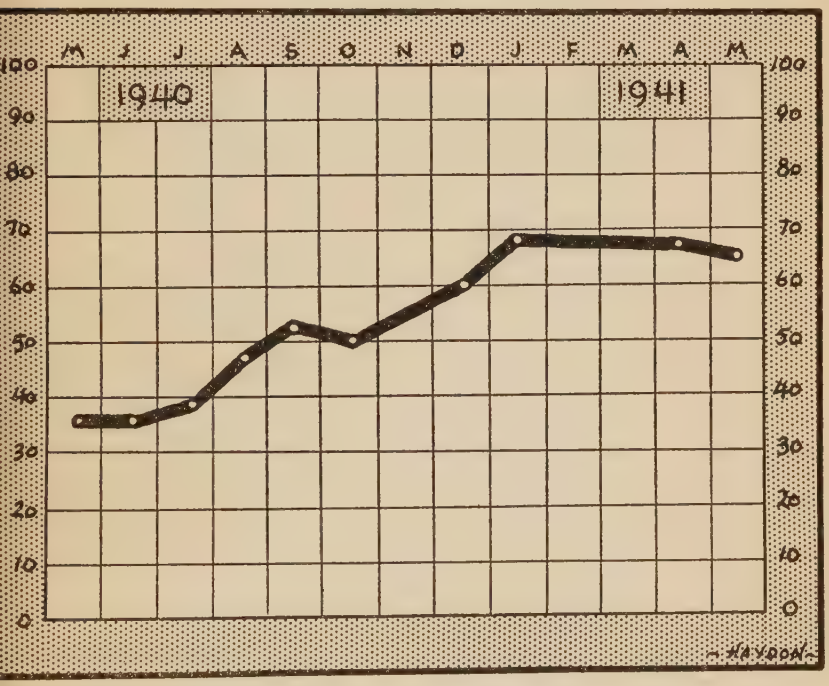
[12] *A telegram from the American Institute of Public Opinion, Monday, May 26, disclosed that the latest correct results on this question are:*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Keep out:* | *38 per cent* |
| *Take the risk:* | *62 per cent* |

# PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO FAVOR AID EVEN AT RISK OF WAR

*Gallup asks: Which of these two things is more important for the United States to try to do—to keep out of war ourselves or to help England win even at the risk of getting into the war?*




[CORRECTION: See footnote, page 18.]

MR. GALLUP: I think it would be interesting; I don't know how significant it would be. I think I should emphasize that our work is chiefly a job of finding out what people think today about *today's* problems. As Lasswell has pointed out here, people's answers about future and hypothetical questions are much less reliable.

MR. BENTON: But the policy-maker must decide on the significance of these figures. He must decide what that phrase "at the

risk of" means to people. Many people have great confidence in Roosevelt—in Roosevelt's determination, his ability as a leader, and his statement that he is going to keep us out of war. They think the risk is negligible because of their confidence in the President. Many people vary in their evaluation of risk. For instance, suppose I asked you: "Would you favor kissing Hedy Lamarr at the risk of catching pneumonia?"

MR. GALLUP: Don't ask me that! I refuse to answer!

MR. BENTON: Or suppose I ask Congress: "Do you favor feeding the unemployed at the risk of bankruptcy?" We heard a lot of talk about the risk of bankruptcy when the question of feeding the unemployed was considered.

MR. LASSWELL: That is a good example of a question, too, in the sense that words like "bankruptcy," and so on, have all sorts of negative associations in the minds of people. One of the nice problems that is involved here would be to take a problem like that and ask the question. Could you formulate a question that would present a policy of more or less pressure in terms of more or less millions spent or more or less lives lost? Have you tried that sort of thing in connection with the present crisis?

MR. GALLUP: No, we haven't tried that, and I would be a little bit suspicious of efforts in that direction.

MR. BENTON: It is a loaded question. But here is a question on which I would like a Gallup poll. "Do you favor convoys at the risk of 50,000 filled coffins, 100,000 filled coffins, 2,000,000 filled coffins, 5,000,000 filled coffins?"

MR. GALLUP: Of course, if I were speaking for the interventionists, I could turn that right around and use the very same wording: "If we don't go into the war, would you be willing to have . . . . if the war were brought to this country?"

MR. BENTON: I'd like both questions. I think both questions would give results that would be interesting and illuminating.

MR. LASSWELL: Yes, that is the vital point here. The problem would be to present the major alternatives which confront the country. The argument here is not between people who want to increase the number of lives lost; the problem is which policy would save the most American lives in the long run. So that is why this question of timing over different periods of time is vital. Have you ever tried to ask questions with a time factor?

MR. GALLUP: Oh, yes! We have asked this question repeatedly: "If Germany defeats England, do you think Germany will start a war against the United States within the next ten years?" We find that the majority of the people say, "Yes."

MR. LASSWELL: I think it is fair to say that the upshot of our discussion today is this: Polls are of fundamental importance to policy-makers. Policy-makers *cannot* rely on the polls to tell them what they ought to do. Policy-makers *can* rely on the polls to report at any given time the preferences and the expectations of the public.

The vital thing is for policy-makers and every citizen of the country to learn how to react critically to these poll results so that he will always ask himself something of this kind: "Would I have answered this question 'Yes' or 'No' if it had been phrased slightly differently?"

By developing this critical attitude on the part of our citizens and our policy-makers, I have every confidence that we can rely upon the poll as a powerful instrument of democracy in this crisis.

MR. BENTON: And I think Gallup is performing a great service.

## OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION

*The answers to the following questions may be found in the text of the broadcast, and page references are provided to assist in locating the answers.*

*

1. In a testing of public opinion on any given issue, how many persons are interviewed as a representative sample of the population? Page 3.
2. What three general objections about public opinion polls do many persons raise? Pages 3-4.
3. About how long does it take to get and tabulate the results of public opinion poll interviews? Pages 4-5.
4. What is the present response of Americans to the question: "If you were asked to vote today on the question of the United States' entering the war against Germany and Italy, how would you vote: to go into the war or to stay out?" Page 8.
5. The Gallup polls on war questions have shown which section of the country to be the most "belligerent"? Page 9.
6. How does America vote on the Gallup question: "If it appeared certain that there was no other way to defeat Germany and Italy except for the United States to go to war against them, would you be in favor of the United States' going to war?" Page 10.
7. The "balance of power" group on foreign policy (as far as war is concerned) amounts, in Dr. Gallup's estimation, to what percentage of Americans? To what number of American voters? Pages 12-13.
8. What percentage of Americans believe their country's future safety depends on an English victory over the Axis? Page 16.

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

*The following questions of wider scope, intended for discussion, are suggested by the broadcast, and answers may be found in the literature on the subject listed in the section "Suggested Readings," found on page 24.*

*

1. Do you believe the public opinion polls
   *a*) Are accurate?
   *b*) Are honest?
   *c*) Mean anything?

2. Consider the various poll questions repeated in the transcript. Do you feel they are fair? That they are impartial? If not, in what respects would you change them, and why?

3. It has been urged that public opinion polls make government follow rather than lead. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Discuss.

4. "The polls are more honest than elections; they represent more *real* opinion on *real* issues than elections; they sample a larger section of the population than elections." Argue for or against this thesis.

5. It has been suggested that the government adopt the best polling techniques and set up a special agency for studying public opinion. Would you approve of this? Would you trust the findings of a government polling agency? Discuss.

6. Do you agree with Dr. Lasswell's assertion that the public's ideas about the future are generally unreliable? Do you think, nevertheless, that public opinion polls should ask questions about the future and about what the public expects will happen under various circumstances? Discuss.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

"A.D. 1940," *Fortune*, January, 1941. *A summary of the public opinion polls and trends in American opinion during 1940.*

"American Opinion about the War," *Harper's*, April, 1941. *A brief recapitulation of opinions on war problems and American policy toward the war.*

CANTRIL, HADLEY, "America Faces the War," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, September, 1940. *A statistical breakdown of American opinion surveys on the war, with attention to the composition of the population groups making up the interventionist and isolationist sentiment in America.*

CANTRIL, HADLEY; RUGG, DONALD; and WILLIAMS, F. W., "America Faces the War: Shifts in Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, December, 1940. *An addendum to the article by Cantril previously cited.*

"The Public Opinion Polls: Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde?" *Public Opinion Quarterly*, June, 1940. *A collection of special articles on problems of public opinion polling and various aspects of sampling the opinions of 130,000,000 Americans.*

# AWARD

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# The Listeners' Round Table . . . .

*Letters to the* ROUND TABLE *frequently contain interesting and illuminating sidelights on the subject matter discussed on the air. These comments are from letters received following the broadcast discussion of "Roosevelt* vs. *Hitler" May 18, 1941.*

*

## From Canada

I . . . . cannot help writing you to let you know just how your program sounds to a soldier who fought for three years in the last great war and is now in training to fight again.

It seems to me that some of the greatest and best men and women in all the world are to be found in the United States of America, and as a Canadian I am glad to acknowledge this fact, and glad . . . . that we have such good neighbors. May the years as they come and go always find us trusting each other and having reason to trust each other.

In spite of all this, however, it is very evident that you have in your wonderful country some of the biggest fools in all the world and you have a habit of letting many of them on the air again and yet again. As we listen to those who would talk and talk and talk about Hitler and the present war, while doing nothing and opposing all those who would do something, we are constantly reminded of the Romans of old who fiddled while Rome burned. Well, they had nothing on many in your country and in ours. Only in our country we have the population divided in our minds simply as "those who *will* fight" and "those who will *not* fight." However, those who will not fight are very anxious that others will, so that we agree on some things at least, among ourselves.

J. F., Ontario, Canada

*

## Sheerest Folly

I listened, as I usually do, to your discussion yesterday with much interest. Sometimes I agree with your conclusions and other times I do not. However, I think your discussions serve an excellent purpose, regardless of whether we agree or disagree. One of the great needs of democracy today is to get our opinions and disagreements out into the open and give them a thorough airing. An idea or an opinion that won't stand up under the searchlight of public scrutiny and free discussion in all probability does not deserve to stand.

I will say right here that I have absolutely nothing in common with Hitler or his apparent ideals. Furthermore, I am quite sure that he does not represent even the average German. I was born and raised in a farming community near Emporia, Kansas, in

which dwelt a large number of German farmers from every corner of Germany. They were, almost without exception, the finest kind of neighbors, the staunchest friends, and devout Lutherans. They did not leave the fatherland because they did not love it, but because of the oppression of its rulers. Therefore, I am convinced that Hitler is not Germany by a long, long walk. He happens to be, at the moment, an evil shoe on the right German foot.

But who, I ask you in all fairness, is more responsible for Hitler being where he is than England herself? You cannot permanently unfairly subjugate 80,000,000 ambitious people. The seed of this war was sown in the Treaty of Versailles—and who was more responsible for that treaty than England? And the seed of the next war will just as surely be sown in the treaty that will *presumably* end this one. The idea that any war can be fought to end all wars is the sheerest folly. At best it is wishful thinking. Six thousand years of recorded history deny the possibility of so doing. The Bible declares it to be a vain hope. It declares that there shall be wars and rumors of wars and still there is no end.

H. C. B., Minnesota

*

## Δημοκρατια

As an interested listener to your ROUND TABLE may I express my personal appreciation of these timely and spontaneous discussions of this present crisis.

I am personally opposed to an Anglo-American alliance with the object of offering peace to Hitler, as President Roosevelt is not the man to offer the olive branch to Hitler.

Mr. Roosevelt, through his bellicose acts from the start, has "missed the boat," and that is definitely established in the minds of students of international politics.

Mr. Roosevelt has not been able to lead us out of our own valley of tears and depression, and the leaders in Europe know this fact as well as we do here in America. He had that chance and opportunity, and the people were with him. He said not long ago to the boys of the press: "*Tempus fugit.*" He should also remember that "*Tempora mutantur et homines in illis*" ["Times change and men with them."—ED.]. He chose the wrong playmates from the start, and I compare his leadership and "running" the country to that of Léon Blum in France, and you know with what dire results and outcome: the complete collapse of France.

Democracy has degenerated here as well as in the so-called democracies in Europe. The word Δημοκρατια [democracy.—ED.] has no longer the true meaning of the ancient Greek and belongs to the *tempora praeterita* [times past.—ED.].

I belong to the "little men on the street," and this is my honest conviction.

J. W. N., Illinois

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105. *Must the World Unite?*
106. *Can We Protect America?*
108. *The Archbishops Look at America*
111. *Where's That War Boom?*
113. *Blitzkrieg, May, 1940*
114. *America and the Peacemongers*
115. *Babies Cost Money*
117. *Have We Time to Think?*
118. *Italy Marches.* (June 16, 1940)
119. *America's Capacity to Arm*
120. *Economic Union for the Americas*
121. *Civil Liberties and the Fifth Column*
122. *M-Day and America*
124. *Should America Conscript Men Now?*
125. *The New France*
126. *What Really Happened at Havana?*
128. *Blitzkrieg on Britain*
129. *Should America Aid Britain?*
130. *Should America Feed Europe?*
131. *Can Germany Conquer Latin America?*
132. *Conscript Wealth, Too?*
134. *Will Hitler Attack America Next?*

Nos.

137. *Warmongers and Appeasers*
138. *Polls and the Election*
140. *World Revolution*
141. *Art and Our Warring World*
142. *The Soviet Union and America*
143. *Is Hitler Revolutionizing Britain?*
144. *Where Are Those 50,000 Planes?*
146. *1951: The Next Decade in Education*

1941

147. *More Aid to Britain Now?*
148. *Is This Our War?*
149. *Morale: First Line of Defense?*
150. *Can Capitalism Defend America?*
152. *Can the Americas Be Invaded?*
153. *Guns or Butter?*
154. *Dilemma in the Far East*
155. *How to Fight Nazi Propaganda*
156. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
157. *Strikes and National Defense*
158. *Defense Economics*
159. *Should America Convoy to Britain?*
160. *Balkan Blitzkrieg*
161. *War Aims and Peace Aims*
162. *Which Road for America?*
163. *Lessons from Europe's War*
164. *The Effect of the Blitzkrieg on the Economic Order*
165. *Defense and America's Health*
166. *Roosevelt* vs. *Hitler.* May 18

ALL ROUND TABLE TRANSCRIPTS CONTAIN ADDED FACTUAL MATERIAL IN THE FORM OF GRAPHS, MAPS, PICTOGRAPHS, FOOTNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, ETC.

# ROUND TABLE NETWORK

## 2:30 P.M. EASTERN DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

| City | Call Letters | Kilo-cycles | City | Call Letters | Kilo-cycles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boston, Mass. | WNAC | 1260 | Portland, Me. | WCSH | 970 |
| Buffalo, N.Y. | WBEN | 930 | Providence, R.I. | WJAR | 920 |
| New York, N.Y. | WEAF | 660 | Rochester, N.Y. | WHAM | 1180 |
| Philadelphia, Pa. | KYW | 1060 | Schenectady, N.Y. | WGY | 810 |
| Pittsburgh, Pa. | WCAE | 1250 | Wilmington, Del. | WDEL | 1150 |

## 1:30 P.M. EASTERN STANDARD TIME

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Allentown, Pa. | WSAN | 1470 | Johnstown, Pa. | WJAC | 1400 |
| Altoona, Pa. | WFBG | 1340 | Lakeland, Fla. | WLAK | 1340 |
| Asheville, N.C. | WISE | 1400 | Lima, Ohio | WLOK | 1240 |
| Atlanta, Ga. | WSB | 750 | Miami, Fla. | WIOD | 610 |
| Baltimore, Md. | WFBR | 1300 | Nashville, Tenn. | WSM | 650 |
| Charleston, S.C. | WTMA | 1250 | Norfolk, Va. | WTAR | 790 |
| Charlotte, N.C. | WSOC | 1240 | Raleigh, N.C. | WPTF | 680 |
| Cleveland, Ohio | WTAM | 1100 | Richmond, Va. | WMBG | 1380 |
| Columbia, S.C. | WIS | 560 | Savannah, Ga. | WSAV | 1340 |
| Columbus, Ohio | WCOL | 1230 | Springfield, Ohio | WIZE | 1340 |
| Dayton, Ohio | WING | 1410 | Tampa, Fla. | WFLA | 970 |
| Detroit, Mich. | WWJ | 950 | Toledo, Ohio | WSPD | 1370 |
| Florence, S.C. | WOLS | 1230 | Washington, D.C. | WRC | 980 |
| Grand Rapids, Mich. | WOOD | 1300 | Winston-Salem, N.C. | WSJS | 600 |
| Greenville, S.C. | WFBC | 1330 | Zanesville, Ohio | WHIZ | 1240 |
| Jacksonville, Fla. | WJAX | 930 | | | |

## 1:30 P.M. CENTRAL DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chicago, Ill. | WMAQ | 670 | Memphis, Tenn. | WMC | 790 |
| Fort Wayne, Ind. | WGL | 1450 | | | |

## 12:30 P.M. CENTRAL STANDARD TIME

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amarillo, Texas | KGNC | 1440 | Milwaukee, Wis. | WTMJ | 620 |
| Birmingham, Ala. | WBRC | 960 | Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn. | KSTP | 1500 |
| Bismarck, N.D. | KFYR | 550 | New Orleans, La. | WSMB | 1350 |
| Bristol, Tenn. | WOPI | 1490 | Oklahoma City, Okla. | WKY | 930 |
| Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis. | WEBC | 1320 | Omaha, Neb. | WOW | 590 |
| El Paso, Texas | KTSM | 1380 | Pittsburg, Kans. | KOAM | 810 |
| Evansville, Ind. | WGBF | 1280 | Rochester, Minn. | KROC | 1340 |
| Fargo, N.D. | WDAY | 970 | St. Cloud, Minn. | KFAM | 1450 |
| Jackson, Miss. | WJDX | 1300 | St. Louis, Mo. | KSD | 550 |
| Kansas City, Mo. | WDAF | 610 | Shreveport, La. | KTBS | 1480 |
| Kingsport, Tenn. | WKPT | 1400 | Sioux Falls, S.D. | KSOO | 1140 |
| Laurel, Miss. | WAML | 1340 | Springfield, Mo. | KGBX | 1260 |
| Little Rock, Ark. | KARK | 920 | Terre Haute, Ind. | WBOW | 1230 |
| Louisville, Ky. | WAVE | 970 | Tulsa, Okla. | KVOO | 1170 |
| Mankato, Minn. | KYSM | 1230 | Wichita, Kans. | KANS | 1240 |

## 11:30 A.M. MOUNTAIN STANDARD TIME

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albuquerque, N.M. | KOB | 1030 | Phoenix, Ariz. | KTAR | 620 |
| Billings, Mont. | KGHL | 790 | Pocatello, Ida. | KSEI | 930 |
| Boise, Ida. | KIDO | 1380 | Safford, Ariz. | KGLV | 1450 |
| Bozeman, Mont. | KRBM | 1450 | Salt Lake City, Utah | KDYL | 1320 |
| Butte, Mont. | KGIR | 1370 | Tucson, Ariz. | KVOA | 1290 |
| Denver, Colo. | KOA | 850 | Twin Falls, Ida. | KTFI | 1270 |
| Helena, Mont. | KPFA | 1240 | Yuma, Arizona | KYUM | 1240 |

## 10:30 A.M. PACIFIC STANDARD TIME

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fresno, Cal. | KMJ | 580 | San Francisco, Cal. | KPO | 680 |
| Los Angeles, Cal. | KFI | 640 | Seattle, Wash. | KOMO | 950 |
| Medford, Ore. | KMED | 1440 | Spokane, Wash. | KHQ | 590 |
| Portland, Ore. | KGW | 620 | | | |

## STATIONS CARRYING ROUND TABLE BY TRANSCRIPTION

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JUNE 1, 1941

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SPEAKERS TO BE ANNOUNCED

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## SUGGESTED READINGS


ELLIOTT, K. A. C., "Science in Wartime: How Can We Preserve and Advance Scientific Progress?" *New Republic,* March 31, 1941.

KAEMPFFERT, WALDEMAR, "War and Technology," *American Journal of Sociology,* January, 1941.

"Scientific and Technical Developments of Use in the War," *Science,* October 11, 1940.

"War in the Laboratories," *Time,* March 26, 1941.



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